

RIVER DOUR

Jeremy Cope

Something of a bombshell was dropped at the October Steering Group meeting. We heard of the excellent work carried out by the Environment Agency in its environmental work and flood control. We then heard of the agency's new River Basin Planning and Management set up to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, (we have yet to understand what it means for the Dour set against what is already being done). Then we heard of the sterling work of the volunteers who under the direction of the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership clear the river of rubbish (in 2011 more than 350 bags, 17 road cones 5 scooters, 2 bicycles but ONLY one shopping trolley).

Then the bombshell. Due to the CUTS White Cliffs Countryside Partnership has lost funding from the District Council and had been unsuccessful in their application to the Environment Agency, (The Agency has provided funding in the past). Funding is required to cover cost of organising, insurance, tools, transport etc. The result is that the Partnership has no alternative but to withdraw from the operation of the volunteer staffed clean ups and maintenance of the riverside walkway. We have had one meeting so far with the Agency stressing that if the river is litter

strewn then their good work will mean little to locals. It is also difficult to understand how litter cannot ultimately cause obstructions to the flow leading to potential flooding. We are due to hold another meeting with another part of the agency but there seems little chance of help.

In the present financial climate Dover will have to find its own solutions and I am pleased to say that funding has been found for the cleanups from Dover Town Council, River Parish Council, and the Society. It is very disappointing that Temple Ewell Parish Council felt unable to participate. The intention is that White Cliffs Countryside Partnership will now be able to operate the cleanups as in the past. A word of warning - this is funding for 2011/12 only and we shall have to repeatedly seek funding in the years ahead. Not only will we need volunteers to clear the rubbish but volunteers to look for funding.



River Dour, Charlton Green

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